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ART. IV. — 1. *Considerations on Representative Government.*

By JOHN STUART MILL. New York: Harper and Brothers. 1864. .

2. *Ancient Law; its Connection with the Early History of Society, and its Relation to Modern Ideas.* By HENRY SUMNER MAINE. With an Introduction by THEODORE W. DWIGHT, LL. D. First American from Second London Edition. New York: Charles Scribner. 1864.

THERE have been few, if any, democrats who have done so little to bring their idol to shame, who have laid so small a number of fallacies and absurdities on its altar, as those of the United States. They have neither seen visions nor dreamed dreams. They have been eminently practical and sober both in their means and in their aims, and have certainly never been surpassed, if ever equalled, in the accuracy of their estimate of the proper limits of the province of government and of those of individual rights. In so far as they have erred, it has been rather in the direction of too great reverence for precedent, than of too great devotion to logic.

Nevertheless, when we state that democracy in America, though by no means what its enemies represent it, still falls far short of what its friends would wish to see it, we only state what everybody knows and deplores. All democracy, though less assailable on logical grounds than most other systems of government, has, of course, defects such as every system must have which depends on the virtue and self-restraint and intelligence of ordinary mortals. But it is not of the existence of these defects that we, in this country, complain. What troubles the admirers of American democracy is, not that men's vices and imperfections prevent its being everything that they could desire it, but that it is not as good as it might be in spite of men's vices and imperfections.

Some of the causes of these shortcomings we discussed in a former number of the Review, and attempted to show that they were to be found in the preponderance, both social and political, assumed during the last fifty years by what may be termed the pioneering element in the population. Some, at

least, of the remainder may, we are satisfied, be discovered in certain misconceptions widely prevalent amongst democrats, both in Europe and America, touching the fundamental principle of democracy, misconceptions which have been instrumental, not only in giving a wrong direction to much of the political thought of the country, but also in saddling democratic government with burdens and encumbrances for which nothing in its own nature can be fairly held responsible, and which, as long as they exist, must prevent its entire success, or even, as some think, threaten it with failure. And they are misconceptions which not simply circulate in the streets and bar-rooms and popular meetings, but pervade most of the literature which of late years has issued from the democratic press.

There can be very little doubt that the doctrine of "popular sovereignty," in the shape in which modern democrats generally hold it and put it in practice,—that is, as implying the personal right of each individual, for his own sake, to take part in the management or direction of the affairs of the state,—is the offspring of the older doctrine of the "equality of men"; and the mode in which the one was transmitted from the ancient to the modern world, and then produced the other, is curious as well as interesting, and some examination of it is necessary to a proper appreciation of the value of either.

The equality of the Greeks meant an equal administration of the laws amongst the citizens of the state; but citizenship always remained a privilege restricted to the few. The claim by an alien, or by a man of any other than the favored race, to share in it, would have been treated as monstrous and absurd by the most enlightened of the Greek political philosophers. And, as long as the Romans retained their freedom, the correlation between the right of making laws and the duty of obeying them, which is preached in modern times, was never dreamed of. The work of government was believed by them to have been assigned within the limits of the empire to the conquering race; and it is now well ascertained that even the idea of the equality of freemen before the law was first conceived, at least with any serious comprehension of its value or of the possibility of putting it into practice, by Julius Cæsar, after the rule of the people had been finally overthrown.

The Greek Stoics constructed, for purely speculative purposes, a theory of the existence, at some indefinitely remote period, of a perfect state, in which men's whole lives, as well as their relations with each other, were regulated by "the law of nature," which nobody could define any better than by calling it the "nature of the universe, the common law of all, which is right reason spread everywhere." It was, in other words, the sway of pure reason and pure justice; but what reason dictated and what justice required were of course left to the imagination of philosophers. One feature of this state seems to have been brought out with tolerable distinctness, namely, "the equality of men." How this idea was taken hold of by the Roman lawyers, who were all more or less under the influence of the stoical philosophy, and by them converted into a juridical maxim, which subsequently exercised a marked and valuable influence on the growth of Roman jurisprudence, has been described by Professor Maine in his third chapter, in a passage of great eloquence and lucidity, but which is unfortunately too long for quotation. From the Roman jurists it came down with the great fabric of Roman law, the noblest legacy bequeathed by the ancient to the modern world, and continued during many centuries to furnish materials for speculation and themes for declamation to French lawyers, though, strangely enough, without exercising any perceptible influence on the course of French legislation, of which the lawyers, during several centuries, may be said to have had almost entire control. It would, however, in all probability, either have died out for want of a "local habitation," or have perished under the application of the historical method to the study of jurisprudence, introduced by Montesquieu, had it not suddenly found friends and preservers in a band of lay speculators on the origin of society, foremost amongst whom was Hobbes, whose share in rescuing "the law of nature" from oblivion Professor Maine has entirely overlooked.

Hobbes was the first to undertake the conduct of inquiries in politics and morals in accordance with the method of his master, Bacon; and as this required all generalizations on these as well as on all other subjects to be based on an examination of nature, "the natural state of man" of course became the first

object of his investigations, as the only safe foundation of a theory of society. He discovered this state to be something very different from the dream of the Stoics,—a state of incessant warfare between individuals with fear and selfishness, as the two great springs of action, and he deduced from it the necessity as well as the actual formation of “a social contract.” The individual savages, becoming weary of strife, mutually agreed to combine and surrender themselves body and soul to the state, or “Leviathan,” as he calls it, which thenceforth became the sole fountain both of law and morality; in other words, a despot, though an all-wise one.

The idea of “a social contract,” thus originated by Hobbes, was taken up by Rousseau, who, however, not only deduced it from a different “natural state,” but based upon it a different “civil state.” Hobbes found all men in the natural state enemies of each other, and engaged in constant warfare; Rousseau found them dwelling together in perfect simplicity and harmony, strangers to hate and greed and selfishness, and all other antisocial passions. Hobbes made them agree to surrender themselves, for the sake of security against one another, to a power stronger than them all, and which was to dispose of them at will, and to be burdened with no obligations towards them whatever. Rousseau’s contract, on the other hand, is based on complete reciprocity, and the power created by it is lodged in the hands of all, for the benefit of all. A man, under his theory, surrenders none of his rights; he simply agrees to exercise them through a new channel.

As might have been expected, Rousseau’s hypothesis gained an easy victory over that of Hobbes. Everybody knows the extraordinary success with which it met from the moment it was promulgated, and the prodigious disturbance in the framework of European society to which it at once led. He became the founder of the democratic party in Europe; and the social contract, with its corollary, the sovereignty of the people, became the first article in the creed of those who then began to assail the existing order of things. It is not difficult to understand the favor with which it was received by the generation to which it was first preached. It seemed to furnish a simple solution of many social problems by which the world had long

been puzzled. It placed a powerful weapon, owing to the absence of anything worthy of the name of historical criticism, in the hands of those to whom the vices of the actual society had become intolerable. When it was desired to liberate the lower classes from the crushing yoke of feudalism, a better way of supporting their cause could hardly have been discovered, than the assertion of the existence of a long-forgotten agreement between government and individuals, in which the duties of the one and the concessions of the other were strictly defined. The fiction of the divine right of kings and aristocrats was thus met by another fiction, the offspring, no doubt, of a nobler feeling, and promising a better result, but still a fiction.

For it is hardly necessary now to say, that the use of the historical method in the study of the origin of society, of which Montesquieu set the example, and of which Professor Maine's work is a brilliant illustration, shows beyond question that the "social compact" was made only in the imagination of philosophers. There is no trace of any such incident in the career of the human race to be found either in history or tradition or law. It is now well established that society grew, and was not made; that the first social bond was kinship, and not contract. The germ of the existing social organism in all countries, and amongst all races, was undoubtedly the family. The earliest form of society was what is called the patriarchal, in which the father was supreme ruler over his own household, and each household, for all practical purposes, formed a state. The first political organization, in the modern sense of the phrase, was undoubtedly a collection of families, descendants of a common ancestor, and ruled by the eldest male of the eldest branch; or, in other words, that which has come down to historical times, and even to our day, in various countries, as the tribe or clan. The period in which each man roved the forest alone, his will his only law, acknowledging no superior, and bound by no permanent ties to any other member of his species, clearly never existed; and the speculations of some modern jurists, in which the origin of property is discovered in the "squatting" of individuals on particular spots of earth, may therefore be pronounced baseless. In archaic society the individual neither owned nor could acquire anything.

The doctrine of the equality of men, after having undergone a reasonable amount of discussion at the hands of the school of political philosophers which Rousseau called into existence in France, and which prepared the way for the French Revolution, in due course of time, according to Professor Maine, crossed the Atlantic, and began to color the writings of those of the founders of the American commonwealth who had time or taste for speculation. We are far from believing, however, that the seed thus imported fell on fruitful soil. The men of the Revolutionary epoch had, in even a still greater degree than the men of our day, that repugnance to exploration in the fields of political philosophy, which makes political progress amongst all Anglo-Saxons so slow and so uncertain, and, to more logically-minded races, so unsatisfactory. That the doctrine of the equality of men, whatever hold it may have taken of the minds of some of those who were actually concerned in drafting the Declaration of Independence, thus causing its recognition in that instrument, met with little or no acceptance from the body of the people, is proved, or at all events strongly suggested, by the fact that we do not find much trace of its influence in the legislation of the various States for some time afterwards; not, in fact, until the settlement of the West had begun to develop a fresh type of character, and brought entirely new influences to bear on the work of government. When the theory had, by force of circumstances, been embodied in the actual social condition of the new States, it speedily began to show itself in the legislation of the older ones.

The great and fundamental difference between the political organizations of modern and those of ancient times is, as Professor Maine shows, the substitution of "local contiguity" for consanguinity, as the basis of political union. Men are members of the same state now, because they live within certain fixed limits, and not, as formerly, because they are descended from a common ancestor. But the theory which modern democrats have adopted of the relations between society and the individual is not deducible from this circumstance. The reason why I belong to a particular community does not either account for or justify my status in it. In short, the connection which, according to this theory, exists between the power of

making laws and the duty of obeying them—the inseparableness of the two ideas—must either be based on a convention, or on a natural right deducible from the fact of human existence. Of the convention, as has been shown, there is no trace in history either ancient or modern, or in the practice of any democratic state.

The natural and inalienable rights of man, those which are inevitable deductions from the mere fact of his creation, and which it is or ought to be the first object of all governments to secure, are, we believe, correctly enumerated in the Declaration of Independence, as “life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.” But the value of this enumeration is, for all practical purposes, very much less than it appears; for it will hardly be pretended that each individual may define liberty or happiness for himself, or attempt to assert or pursue them in his own way. Society composed of men making any such claim would be a contradiction in terms. To make society possible, the nature of liberty, the nature of happiness, and the mode of enjoying them, have to be fixed by some authority higher than the will of the individual citizen, to which all must submit,—those who concur in, as well as those who dissent from, its conclusions. In all democracies this paramount authority is of necessity lodged in the majority; and although the minority is loosely said to share in the government, its influence on it, if it have any, is generally neither direct nor recognized. It expresses its opinion about the public policy; but the very fact that it is a minority shows that for the moment at least this opinion has no weight. So that in practice the right of the individual to take part in the management of the national affairs does everywhere, and must always, resolve itself into the right of saying what he thinks as to the way in which the work should be done; and this he does by means of his vote.

A vote is, however, not always simply an expression of opinion. If it were, we should have little to say against the proposition, that every man is entitled to it, as one of his natural rights, and therefore responsible only to his own conscience for the use he makes of it. But it may be, and very frequently is, something more than this; and whenever it is so, its consequences are very far from being confined to the voter himself.

The vote of one man, insignificant as it seems, and small as is the force which it derives from his will, may, in certain combinations of circumstances which nobody can foresee or control, turn the scale in favor of a measure vitally affecting the condition and destiny of a whole nation. Moreover, no man ever casts a vote on a question about which there is any division of sentiment, without neutralizing the opinion of somebody else. The immediate result of this is to deprive the voice of one of his neighbors of all weight, or in fact to impose silence on him just as effectually as if he were dragged away from the polls before depositing his ballot.

Now there is no argument in support of the natural right of individuals to a power of this sort, the exercise of which may so seriously influence the welfare of other human beings, which might not be urged with almost equal force in favor of the divine right of kings or of the divine mission of Cæsars. It would be difficult, in fact, to imagine anything more repugnant to the ideas on which all true democracy is based, than the notion that any man, or any body of men, has been armed with any power whatever over the fate of others as a personal prerogative, — something which may be claimed and is claimed by modern democrats for each inhabitant of a free state in virtue simply of his age and sex.

It may be supposed by some, however, that the theory of democratic government, preached by the majority of democratic writers either here or in Europe, is after all a matter of purely speculative interest, and that it has not, and cannot have, any practical influence on affairs.

It is true that the fallacy — as we believe it to be — has never in America obtained any formal recognition in legislation. The much-talked of right of all who pay taxes and obey the laws to share in the government has never been acknowledged in the Constitution of any of the States. Women, minors, aliens, and negroes are either totally deprived of the franchise, or subjected to a property qualification. In some of the States all voters are forced to submit to an educational test. But in spite of these express admissions of the inapplicability of the cherished principle, even to a political organization like that of the United States, composed of the

most intelligent community in the world, democratic politicians continue to talk of it in much the same strain as of "eternal justice," or "eternal truth," without apparently ever perceiving, or at least acknowledging, that there are any limits to its operation, or that it is open to any more question or cavil than a man's right to his life or to the fruits of his industry. And the effect of this manner of talking and thinking upon national politics is, in our opinion, highly injurious in a variety of ways, and principally in this; that it banishes or conceals from the electors that sense of trusteeship which ought always to underlie the exercise of the franchise, and which is the only sound and safe basis of citizenship. It may be confidently asserted, that in no democratic country, however favored by circumstances, in which the doctrine that he holds the suffrage, not as a personal right, but in trust for the rest of the community, is not constantly present to the voter's mind as the only true one, will the highest attainable purity or efficiency in the government ever be witnessed. The steady cultivation, by every possible agency, of a feeling of responsibility to others than ourselves for the use made of the franchise, is absolutely necessary to secure a general advance towards the conscientious performance of this most important of all our social duties.

Although there can be no doubt that great efforts are made to diffuse this feeling both by the pulpit and the press, they can never be attended with even a fair measure of success, as long as the bulk of the population are taught from their childhood that every male, on arriving at the age of twenty-one, has the same right to vote that he has to air or light or to the wages of his labor. The idea of property in a thing is a simple one, which the popular mind readily apprehends, and, once apprehended, all subsequent attempts to saddle it with conditions or modifications are likely to prove abortive, as everybody will admit who has watched the result of the efforts to create a sense of trust with regard to other things to which the claim of individual right cannot well be disputed,—such as health, strength, and riches. How often and how solemnly men are told that their mental and bodily powers, their wealth and their accomplishments, are all given them for the promotion of God's glory and the good of their fellow-creatures; and yet

who does not know how lamentably small is the influence of these teachings on the majority of the possessors of these gifts, how generally the idea of irresponsible ownership overrides or excludes every other? One of the results of the great sanctity with which modern jurisprudence has, for reasons which we cannot here stop to discuss, clothed everything bearing the name of property, has been the creation of a very strong tendency—especially amongst Anglo-Saxons, owing, no doubt, to their marked individualism—to strip it of all conditions and qualifications, and knit it as closely as possible to the person of the owner, as if it were an emanation from himself. This has been remarkably exemplified in the history of the modern law of wills, in that of English land tenures, and in that of slavery in this country. No such absolute dominion over the soil as that claimed and exercised by Scotch and Irish landlords was known in the ancient or mediæval world, and the complete degradation of the slave to the level of a thing was a feat reserved for the legislation of our own age.

Of the way in which this tendency has affected the popular notion of the nature of the franchise, there are abundant illustrations in the political history both of this country and of France and England. In England it has all but completely destroyed electoral purity. The farmer uses his vote to “oblige his landlord,” with as little hesitation as he would display in lending him his horse; and in the boroughs, as recent investigations have proved, electors sell their suffrages as unblushingly, and almost as openly, as the goods on their counters. The remarkable picture drawn by M. de Tocqueville, in the now famous speech delivered in the Chamber of Deputies a few weeks before the Revolution of 1848, of the moral condition of the comparatively small body of persons who then possessed the franchise in France, reveals the striking fact, that so completely had they come to look on it as personal property, that they generally felt it to be a duty which a man owed to his relatives to use it in whatever way would most redound to their personal advantage.*

In the United States, the idea of his being a trustee is not suggested to the elector’s mind, as in England, or as in France

* Democracy in America, (Bowen’s ed.,) Vol. II. p. 472.

before 1848, by the visible legal exclusion of a majority of the male population from the electoral body. But there is in every democratic country a body of persons who are, to all intents and purposes, deprived of all share in legislation ; a fact which we disguise by calling them "the minority." This minority, especially when great interests are at stake, stands very much in the position of the non-electors in those countries in which the franchise is restricted to a particular class. It is true, it can always remove its disability by going over to the camp of the majority ; but as this means the surrender of its convictions, or in other words suicide, it cannot be seriously spoken of either as a means of relief or as a distinction. We cannot, by any choice of phrases, get rid of the fact that the majority elects the government, and is apt to administer it in its own fashion and for its own purposes ; and under the influence of the reigning theory of the nature of democracy, the tendency in this direction grows every year stronger and stronger. The majority is, of course, liable to be driven from power, as all governments are, by its own excesses ; but this retribution rarely comes in free countries, except through a long course of agitation, during which there is plenty of time for serious injury to the public morals.

We cannot undertake to discuss here all the means by which this tendency may be effectively checked. It may be stated in general terms, that it will be checked in proportion to the spread of intelligence, and the consequent strengthening of sympathy, and the sense of justice in the community at large. But among the agencies which may be employed to hasten this consummation, there stands prominently the banishment from political literature of the mischievous fallacy, that persons are armed with the franchise in a free state for the simple reason that they are of the male sex, of full age, and not lunatics or idiots.

If the franchise be, as we believe it, not a right, but a trust committed to each individual still more for the benefit of the rest of the nation than for his own, and to be used solely for the promotion of the general progress of the community in virtue and knowledge, which is after all the only real progress, — it is a corollary from this, that there are different degrees of

fitness for the exercise of it. If it be conferred for the promotion of certain ends, men's sense of the value of these ends, and their skill in discovering the best means of securing them, must vary as their knowledge, cultivation, and powers of mind vary. Some will know much better than others in what way a vote ought to be used, or, in other words, be very much better judges both of measures and of men. And this disposes at once of the extraordinary notion, which, under one disguise or another, has of late years obtained so much currency in the United States, that majorities are infallible, that the general diffusion of an opinion is to be accepted as proof of its soundness, and that, after being adopted by the people, there is not much left for those who differ with them, let their training or experience or ability be what it may, but to acquiesce and be silent. What those who are possessed with this notion ask us to believe is neither more nor less than that God, who has so constituted man that, in all other sciences, the highest excellence and deepest insight can only be attained by the careful cultivation of the natural powers, has left the solution of the great problems of political science — that which perhaps most strongly influences human nature and destiny — to the passions or selfish instincts of the least cultivated or gifted portion of the community. And it is to the spread of this theory, differently expressed of course, that we owe a large portion of that exclusion of men of high culture from much share in the management of our affairs, or even much direct influence on it, which is one unfortunate feature of our political life. If we watch the course of these men during the progress of any great political crisis, we shall very frequently find them either reduced to inaction, or relegated to the humble task of finding reasons for the popular decisions.

Some of the indirect effects of this doctrine are none the less mischievous for being seldom traced to their proper source. It is safe to say, that a very large proportion of whatever evil influence foreign-born voters exercise on our politics has been due to the false impression of the nature of the franchise which they have received from democratic teachings in Europe, and which every party that seeks their support here takes all possible pains to confirm.

Instead of hearing the franchise always spoken of and having it always presented to his mind as a trust or privilege, something to be highly valued and carefully used, every ignorant peasant who sets foot on our shores hears, from the moment of his landing, that it is a right to which his age and sex entitle him for his own special use and behoof, not simply by the laws of the land, but by the laws of nature. The idea that the rest of the community has anything to say to the manner in which he employs it; that he is bound, in casting his ballot, to take any thought for the national honor, or for the feelings, tastes, or traditions of those whose fathers' labor and self-denial have made the republic the safe and splendid refuge for poverty and misfortune which he finds it; that he has anything to learn from its men of education touching the policy of the government, or the merits or demerits of legislation,—is something which it is safe to say is now but rarely offered for his consideration. To such a height has this worship of majorities run of late, that it is leading, on the part of a portion of the press and many of our public men, to a sort of hostility to everybody who possesses property, apparently for no better reason than that they are the fewer in number. Nobody who has paid much attention to our political discussions of late years, both in and out of Congress, can have avoided being struck by the general tendency to exalt and glorify “the poor,” apparently for the simple reason that they are poor, and in a corresponding degree to depreciate “the rich”; and, singularly enough, the standard of wealth seems to be, in political phraseology, every year sinking lower and lower. It appeared in a recent debate on the Enrolment Bill in the Senate, that to be “rich,” for political purposes, a man need now-a-days only possess an income of two thousand dollars a year, no matter from what source he derives it. Once in receipt of this or any greater sum annually, whether as the wages of labor or the interest on savings, it seemed to be the conclusion of some of the speakers that he lost all claim to tenderness, consideration, or even justice, on the part of the government. It was gravely proposed by one Senator to draft him, or, in case he provided a substitute, to levy a tax of five per cent on his income for the full term for which he might have been liable to serve.

What makes this tendency all the more singular, and, let us add, all the more dangerous, is the fact that hereditary wealth may be said to be so rare in the United States as to be almost unknown. Nearly all those who possess property have accumulated it by their own industry, prudence, and self-denial, — qualities which are of the highest value in every country, but which, it may be safely alleged, must be possessed by the bulk of the citizens of a republic in order to insure its stability. Consequently property-holders are in reality the most valuable portion of the population, and small property-holders, those who have already given proofs of their intelligence and of ambition to rise in the world and to raise their children, are that class of all others which it should be the object of legislation to foster and encourage.

We can hardly wonder that, under the influence of such teachings as these, the foreign element in our population should play a part in politics that fills some of the most thoughtful and dispassionate observers with alarm as to the consequences of the immigration which still continues to pour in, and which many of those whose idea of progress is limited to the increase of wealth hail with delight. Nor can we wonder that that most important function of popular government — the education of those who live under it — should be so ill performed as it now notoriously is in many districts, and produce so little impression, at least on the mass of “adopted citizens,” when every pains is taken by democratic leaders to represent the office of elector as something which calls for no qualifications beyond a human form and the masculine gender, and which entails even fewer responsibilities than the possession of a suit of clothes.

By far the most important political problem before the nation at this moment is that concerning the immediate extension of the franchise to the liberated slaves. While recognizing fully the impolicy of excluding, where it can possibly be avoided, any portion of the population from the enjoyment of the privileges possessed by the rest, the theory of the franchise for which we have been contending, if sound, suggests certain considerations with regard to its bestowal on them which it would be neither prudent nor just to

overlook, even on the part of those who, like ourselves, are most friendly to the claims of the negroes, and who believe that the reorganization of the Southern society, and the future peace of the nation, both require the abolition of all political distinctions drawn from color.

The joy which we feel at the disappearance of slavery from our soil must not make us unmindful of all that has been said, and justly said, within the last thirty years, of its effects on the character of the slave. If even half what we have heard of it from those who have studied its workings be true, the worst scars it inflicts are not those which it leaves on the bodies of its victims. It begets, we know, an indifference and insensibility to the obligation of truth. It destroys self-respect, as well as respect for property and for the marriage tie. Its systematic refusal to recognize any moral relation between parents and children has of course a strong tendency to extinguish that sense of parental responsibility which is the very basis of civil society. It purposely keeps the understanding in the lowest and darkest condition to which it can be reduced by external circumstances. It prevents the formation of habits of industry, by refusing to labor its just reward, and supplying no better incentive to exertion than the base passion of bodily fear. And it keeps even the instincts in a rudimentary condition, by exempting the slave from the anxieties and cares of the savage or wild beast.

We are far from suggesting that the mere fact that a man has been subjected to the operation of an agency of this sort should be allowed to form an absolute disqualification for citizenship; but we doubt if sound statesmanship does not require that it be deemed, in practice, sufficient to raise a presumption of unfitness, to be rebutted by each voter for himself, by submitting to a test. What the nature of this test should be, it is not very difficult to decide. No modern republic can, in our opinion, be said to rest on a sure foundation, in which the ability to read understandingly is not possessed by all or nearly all voters. We have just had, in the Southern insurrection, a tremendous demonstration of this proposition. A people who cannot read in modern times becomes the blind tool of an educated few, as naturally as sheep become the prey

of wolves. The ability to read is not only the best attainable indication of general intelligence, but the only proof, constituted as society now is, which a man can offer of his fitness to follow or take part in various political discussions of the day, and to possess himself of the facts and arguments necessary to the formation of anything worthy of the name of a judgment on any public measure or public man. By reading, we need hardly say, we do not mean that singular educational test imposed on the voter in some of the States, by which the recitation of a scrap of the Declaration of Independence or of the Constitution is allowed to establish a man's claim to the franchise. What should be required of a voter who is expected to be able to read should, in our opinion, be a fair exhibition of his capacity to read a newspaper of election-day in an intelligible manner; not because newspapers are a very high or very instructive species of literature, but because they have become in our day the only means by which the citizens of a free state can either interchange their opinions or concert plans of political action. It is the modern equivalent for the meeting in the agora. In the ancient republics the citizens were a comparatively small body, in the habit of assembling frequently, discussing public questions with each other, and listening to the opinions of the most enlightened men of the community. Nearly all knowledge, too, was at that time communicated orally, and the memory is believed to have possessed a strength which the printing-press has long ago destroyed. So that a Greek or a Roman might have been a very intelligent and well-informed man, without knowing one letter from the other.

A republic of the size of ours would, therefore, in those days, have been pronounced an impossibility, and in those days it was an impossibility. But the newspaper brings the voter in Kansas into almost as close and intimate communion with the voter in New York, as if they met every day in the marketplace; and that the electors rely more and more on it every day for the formation and diffusion of their opinions, must be evident to everybody who watches the drift of popular habits amongst ourselves. Speeches are certainly listened to, but the influence of oratory in politics is every year decreasing. A

speech in our day possesses little potency till it is printed ; and nobody who pays much attention to those that are delivered, either "on the stump" or in the various legislatures, can avoid seeing how largely they consist of a rehash of "editorials" on the same questions. During a Presidential or other canvass, the "great demonstrations" are poorly attended by the reading classes ; and at the South, where reading is a comparatively rare accomplishment, the stump possesses an importance in electioneering which it has never assumed here.

A voter, therefore, who, in our day and in a republic like this, cannot read, may be said to labor, for all political purposes, under mental incapacity. He stands towards the rest of the citizens very much in the position in which a deaf mute must have stood in Greece. He is of necessity imperfectly informed with regard to all the leading facts of the national life, is at the mercy of anybody who has any interest in deceiving him, and becomes one of a class which is isolated in feelings as well as in opinions by a barrier which is none the less formidable for being invisible. When we propose, therefore, to require of the negro proof of his ability to read before allowing him to vote, we seek to impose no restriction on him which we would not impose on the white man as well.

In the hands of any man to whom this requirement would prove an insurmountable obstacle, the franchise would certainly prove simply a delusion and a snare. And it is fair to infer from what is already known of the freedmen, that the exaction of this qualification from them at the polls would not continue very long to exclude any considerable number from the electoral body, while it would almost certainly prove the means of stimulating the great mass of them in the acquisition of knowledge and of the habits of civilized life.

The argument in favor of the general bestowal of political rights on the freedmen without the imposition of a test, drawn from the well-known efficacy of the franchise as a means of education, sound as it undoubtedly is when applied either to small minorities, as the foreign immigrants in this country, or to men inheriting the training of many generations in the ordinary duties of social life, such as the working classes of France or England or Germany, would seem to call for some

modification when applied to the case of an immense body of men like the negroes, suddenly liberated from the lowest form of human degradation, and isolated by certain marked peculiarities, both moral and physical, from the rest of the community. We repeat, that it must not be forgotten, in discussing this question, that the franchise cannot be so bestowed as to be simply an instrument of elevation, or so that the use made of it by the voter shall affect himself only. It is and must be a power, as well as a means of training. The manner in which a million of men use it, besides influencing their own welfare, influences that of the rest of the community; and it may be used in such fashion as to deprive another million of all voice in the management of the national affairs. It would seem as if the training power of citizenship would be in no way diminished by the imposition of such conditions as we have suggested above. Any man whom citizenship would elevate or improve, would be very ready to fulfil them. Any man who failed or refused to do so, would hardly be likely to benefit either himself or others by the use he would make of it.

We are not so visionary as ever to look for the total disappearance of party organizations from the politics of free communities, or to suppose that it will ever be possible to carry on a popular government without them. They stand in very much the same relation to opinion that the engine does to steam. They furnish the machinery by which it is enabled to make its impression on society and government; and there can be little question that, much as they have been declaimed against, they stimulate thought on political questions, by associating the spread of certain ideas with the honors and exultation of victory. To prevent them, however, from shutting the state itself out of view altogether, and concentrating the thoughts and even the allegiance of the citizen in themselves alone, it is absolutely necessary that the prizes for which they struggle should be great, and that the interests which they represent should possess both dignity and importance. In all free countries there exists, as long as the questions on which opinion is divided are trivial or promise no striking or serious result, no matter how they may be decided, that tendency to convert party organizations from means into ends, which King-

lake remarks as existing in some European countries with regard to armies. During a long peace, the drill, the discipline, and general appearance of the men are apt to assume the first place in the eyes of the leaders, and the objects for which the regiment or corps exists to be altogether forgotten. A party from which principles or ideas have departed, which is held together simply by the *esprit de corps*, or the traditional attachments of the members to the name, is somewhat like an armed force, which can manœuvre beautifully on the parade-ground, but is confounded and paralyzed by the noise and disorder of the battle-field.

And yet this was very nearly the condition to which a long period of almost unbroken prosperity reduced parties in the United States. The form of government had been definitely settled, and it had become certain that the new republic was dedicated, in fact as well as in form, to democracy. There was nothing to differ about possessing enough vital interest to stir the national heart or touch the national conscience. Slavery, it is true, was there, with all its hideousness and all its promise of coming woe; but nobody regarded it, except a small band of far-sighted thinkers and a few fanatics. Long years had to elapse before it assumed the rank of a national question. In the mean time there was nothing to agitate about which possessed for the great mass of the people any but a speculative importance. There were no wars, no seditions, no liberties to be asserted or defended, no privileges to be overthrown, no principles to be vindicated. The public threw itself accordingly into the work of making money; but the party organizations remained, and, for want of better employment, carried on a war of cries and catchwords, fought about leaders as long as men of eminence still lingered in the arena, and at last fought for office and nothing more.

We should certainly have abundant reason to be thankful for the war, bold as the statement may seem, if it had done nothing else than put an end to this ignoble game, and give parties loftier and more momentous subjects of strife. But it is evident that many of the old ideas and old practices have managed to obtrude themselves into the new era, and are likely to preserve their place in it in spite of the gravity which the

events of the last four years have infused into the national politics. The great doctrine that a victorious party is, after all, only the trustee of the nation, which was entirely banished from the public sight during the period of reckless trifling and corruption which preceded the Rebellion, has not yet regained its ascendancy, and is not likely to do so until its claims to recognition are forced on professional politicians with a strong hand by the public at large. To these men, no matter to which side they belong, it is, we are sorry to say, thoroughly distasteful. The habit of regarding the various public offices as, first and foremost, means of rewarding services rendered in electioneering, and only secondarily as instruments of administering the national government, has grown so inveterate with most of those who at present make politics a pursuit, that they are apt to regard anybody who suggests such reforms as making the places of officials permanent, or their appointment dependent on their qualifications, or giving them promotion in regular gradation, or providing pensions for the superannuated, as a visionary, to whom it is not worth the while of "practical men" to listen. In fact, large numbers of the latter class are now so used to the present system, that they never think of any other as possible, and look on "rotation in office" as an inseparable incident of all democracy. The ridiculous custom of selecting the Cabinet of a new President from amongst the disappointed aspirants to the office of the same party, to which Mr. Lincoln adhered with such simple fidelity, and of consulting "the claims" of geographical localities in filling some of the most important positions in the public employ, are among the indirect consequences of the belief that the majority is a final cause, and that its chief business is to secure its position and reward its adherents.

One of the obvious results of this system, and one of the most mischievous, is that the government rarely finds itself able to secure the best men for its civil service. Its subordinate offices are not sought as desirable positions by persons of high character and qualifications, and are therefore, as a matter of necessity, too often bestowed on men who have been unsuccessful in other walks of life, or who have made electioneering a profession. So that we witness at this moment the extraor-

dinary fact, that to be the servant of what is fondly called "the best government the world ever saw," not only does not, as in other countries, raise a man in the social scale, but actually reflects something very like discredit on him. Of course the maintenance of thorough discipline or responsibility amongst a body thus composed is impossible. Its members have nothing to hope, and very little to fear. As they are not appointed because they are considered valuable, they are not dismissed when found to be worthless, and rarely could be dismissed without giving offence to some influential patron, who had either earned the gratitude of the administration or managed to excite its apprehensions. The want of all means, on the part of heads of departments, either of rewarding merit or punishing neglect or incompetency, of course produces the usual fruits,—waste, corruption, and inefficiency. And the temptation to dishonesty or negligence amongst the employees is increased by the nefarious practice—in which all parties, we regret to say, indulge—of extorting from them a portion of the salaries paid them by the public by way of subscription towards election expenses, making dismissal the penalty of refusal to pay. This tax sometimes runs so high, as was proved on a recent notorious trial in New York, as twenty-five per cent of the incomes of the poor wretches who have to submit to it. Nothing could better exemplify than this does the extent to which political parties have become indoctrinated with the notion that whichever of them happens to be in power is for the time being the state, and is therefore entitled to use all its resources, without restriction, for its own ends, however selfish.

This question of administrative reform possessed before the war very little of what, in popular parlance, is called "practical importance"; that is to say, the amount of damage done by administrative abuses was small. But this was entirely owing to the fact that the machinery of government was very limited in extent, and had very little work to do. The collection and outlay of a revenue of sixty or eighty millions, the maintenance of an army of fifteen thousand men and of a navy of a hundred ships, offered but a narrow field of operations, at worst, to negligence or fraud. But we have now a host of tax-gatherers, an excise system which throws its net over al-

most every act of life, one of the largest armies and largest navies in the world ; and the vast and complicated civil service by which all these have to be managed and directed is liable, under the existing political usage, to be utterly disarranged or broken up once in four years by the dismissal of everybody connected with it. We should insult the intelligence of our readers by offering to prove that the maintenance of any such usage under present circumstances must end in disaster to our institutions, or in a radical change in their character. The employment of such a large body of officials as electioneering agents would of itself, in a very short time, render the Presidential election the merest farce, and render executive responsibility a sham. And to suppose that business so extensive, so complicated, so wide in its ramifications—dealing with so many important and delicate interests, and offering, as it must offer under the best system of administration, so many temptations to fraud and misconduct—as that of our government has become, can be carried on without radical changes, is to display great ignorance both of human nature and of political science. We must have a general rule for the selection of employees; their tenure of office must be made dependent on their good behavior ; there must be promotion as a reward for fidelity and ability, and pensions as a refuge for old age. In other words, some inducement must be held out to honest and competent men to enter the public service, to remain in it and behave well in it.

The control of the people over the administration would be amply secured, and secured in accordance with the soundest democratic principles, if no offices were made vacant by a change of administration, except those of the President and of the heads of departments. It is well known that the responsibility of the Executive to the public is under the present system reduced to a minimum, by the fact that he is able to shield all bad appointments under the plea of party customs or obligations, and that the Senate aids him in doing so. There can be very little doubt, too, that the withdrawal of the minor offices of government from party competition at every election would exercise a purifying influence on politics. What attracts such swarms of needy and unscrupulous adventurers to the

political arena — men whose very presence in it has made the word “politician” a term of reproach — is undoubtedly the multitude of small prizes which are at every election placed within the reach of those who now make a trade of striving for them and retailing them. Remove them, and this class would, we are satisfied, cease to take much interest in public affairs, and the management of them would naturally fall — at least to a far greater extent than at present — into the hands of those who feel some interest in the national welfare, and some generous concern for the national reputation. But as we have said before, we need not hope for changes of this sort from the hands of those eminently “practical” sages called “party leaders,” to whom electioneering and “lobbying” comprise the whole science of government. They live by these abuses, and they are able to live by them solely by their success in persuading the people that their mode of carrying on the government is the only truly “democratic” one. Every attempt to bring the administration really under the control of the public, to make it really amenable to the honest and enlightened opinion of the nation, is denounced by this class as “aristocratic” or “monarchical,” — as “opposed to the genius of our institutions” or “un-American”; and the experience of nearly forty years in the use of this clap-trap and cant has rendered them so dexterous, that they generally manage to cover everybody who directly assails them or their practices with odium, and drive him into private life as a “fanatic,” a “visionary,” or an “old fogey.”

When we look about us in quest of the agencies by which the American people is to be aided and enlightened in preparing itself and its institutions for the great responsibilities which it has incurred through the war, for the proper discharge of the momentous trust which has devolved upon it as the consequence of the firm grasp with which it now holds possession of the continent, we confess that the prospect is not wholly encouraging. If we are to judge of what is to happen hereafter by what has happened in the past, we shall be driven to the conclusion that the great problems which will henceforward present themselves for solution at every step will have to be solved in a large degree by the blind drift of events, — that

we shall too often either find ourselves at the mercy of circumstances, or possess no better means of controlling them than the natural force of the nation. We are far from under-rating the strength of this force. But let it be ever so powerful, it will always be in a certain sense "brute force," in so far as it is not exerted under the direction of skill, experience, and culture. As long as its movements are not controlled by intelligent forethought, it will never reach its results except by processes purely empirical, and after a prodigious waste of strength, of time, of faith and hope and enthusiasm.

Some striking indications of what we fear on this score are to be found in the history of our military organization, and of the various attempts which have been made to raise revenue by taxation during the recent war. The most wonderful results were achieved; but in both cases there was an enormous strain thrown upon the vital force of the nation, which the command of greater skill and training, and greater respect for discipline, organization, and experience, might have enabled us to avoid. Those who think it a good plan for a people to accept no rule or principle which it has not itself tested, would do well to remember that there is such a thing as overtasking national as well as individual nerves, and that there is a kind of exhaustion which does not show itself either in custom-house or in agricultural tables, a weariness which is not incompatible with prodigious activity in making money, which the very love of material good often hastens, and which often ends in making men first careless about popular government, and then hostile to it. There was, for instance, no lesson of history and no deduction from principles of human nature clearer than that which told of the fatal influence of slavery on public morals, on politics, and on industry; but nothing short of actual experiment was sufficient to convince the body of the people of its real danger. We have learnt only through four years of war, and the desolation of half a continent, to believe what all the wisest men in the world have been telling us for a whole century. The political and moral value of a system of forced labor was actually still a debated question four years ago, or less, in many parts of the North; now, everybody has made up his mind about it; but surely it ought to have been

possible to reach a conclusion so plain without wading through slaughter and piling up a mountain of debt.

The spectacle of a great nation limping and stumbling to its destiny is not a pleasing or a hopeful one; and though mistakes and waste of power cannot under our system, any more than under any other system of government, be entirely avoided, they may be reduced to a minimum; and to effect this a large share of the brains and culture of the country must be brought to bear on the work of government. We have no hesitation in concluding, even with the data now before us, that this is essential to the success of the "great experiment." Whatever in our social or political arrangements tends to secure this result may be pronounced good; whatever tends to prevent or retard it may be pronounced bad. The feature in all democratic governments now in existence which excites most alarm and misgiving amongst philosophical observers, is the absence of vigorous attempt to secure it; and this alarm is heightened by the small amount of concern which, as a general rule, democratic communities evince about it. That more study and training may be every year called into the service of our government, as the popular appreciation of their value increases, and as the growing complexity of our affairs calls for them, is very possible; but ignorance and recklessness may, in the mean time, work infinite mischief among us. The only aid which the busiest, most restless community in the world, that which is perhaps more than any other absorbed in material pursuits, receives, and without some great change is likely to receive, in forming its opinions on the thousand momentous questions which the place it has assumed in the world will now force it to decide nearly every year, is offered by the clergy and the press.

With the goodness or badness of the "taste" displayed by the clergy in discussing political questions in the pulpit, we have nothing to do; nor are we at present concerned with the effect of this practice either on religion or on religious teaching. We have no hesitation in expressing the opinion, however, that, during such crises as the anti-slavery struggle and the present war, the influence of political preaching on politics and society has been beneficial, and has done much to supply one of the great wants of our time. But the clergy do not

now constitute what Coleridge calls "the clerisy" of any civilized country. They are not, in other words, the guardians and teachers of all the liberal arts and sciences, the sole repository of the knowledge of the nation, and the only persons competent to instruct it in whatever the interests of progress require it to learn. The range of their studies everywhere has become very much contracted since the period when they formed the only cultivated class in Europe, or, perhaps we should rather say, has not expanded as the field of science has expanded. Their education in modern times, like that of all other professions, has become peculiarly professional, and is, therefore, concentrated on a very small number of subjects. And although it is safe to say that, as a class, they rank in America above any other in the community in general attainments, the nature of their duties and of their training, and the sort of social isolation to which usage condemns them, as well as the habit which they are, in a certain sense, driven into cultivating, of attaching little or no influence to purely material considerations, render them unsafe guides in the decision of great questions of government. Nor is it at all likely that they will ever arrogate to themselves any such position, or that, if they did, it would be generally conceded to them by the public. The tendency of the times is rather to diminish than, increase the authority of their office, and it is safe to say that, in all countries, their influence on public affairs is every day becoming weaker. The prominence of the part they have played in American politics during the last fifteen or twenty years has been mainly due to the exceptional nature of the contest which has been raging during that period, and the unusual weight and importance of the moral interests involved in it.

There is a popular theory, that in every free state in modern times the liberty of the press is the great safeguard of public liberty; that the press is in fact the only trustworthy champion of the popular interests; that, let parties become ever so corrupt or selfish, or power ever so menacing, it never flinches from the work of honest criticism. Mr. Mill quotes M. Salvador, "a distinguished Hebrew," as saying, "that the Prophets were in church and state the equivalent of the modern liberty of the press"; and adds, that this "gives a just, but

not an adequate, conception of the part fulfilled in national and universal history by this great element of Jewish life, by means of which, the canon of inspiration never being complete, the persons most eminent in genius and in moral feeling could not only denounce and reprobate, with the direct authority of the Almighty, whatever appeared to them deserving of such treatment, but could give forth higher and better interpretations of the national religion, which thenceforth became part of the religion."

Now the press in all democratic countries (we use the term *democratic* in a general sense, to designate all countries in which the popular element predominates in the government) may be said, for all political purposes, to consist simply of the newspapers. They have long emerged from the humble position of purveyors of news; and comment on public events and public measures, in short, on the whole national life from day to day and from year to year, may now be said to form their principal business, and they have monopolized it. Hardly any other form of publication in which political questions are discussed, be it pamphlet, magazine, review, or book, now obtains more than a very trifling circulation, while the daily papers enter every hut in the land.

If the press were to stand in the relation to society which the needs of a democracy require that it should stand, and in which orators and editors in some of their loftiest flights of rhetoric sometimes try to persuade the public that it does stand, the part that it would play would undoubtedly be something like that suggested by M. Salvador. It ought to be the instrument by which "the persons most eminent in genius and moral feeling," as well as in culture, standing aloof from the tumult of the forum, could counsel their countrymen on the conduct of their affairs, as well as "denounce and reprobate" whatever they considered wrong in the national policy. And if the press could be converted into such an instrument, it would be hard to conceive of a pursuit which would present greater attractions for the very best class of minds than that of a journalist. To watch the ebb and flow of party strife, without being stirred by its passions; to find in philosophy the moral of each year's story, and in each year's story the verifi-

cation of philosophy ; to keep the great lessons of history and the great principles of law and morality constantly before the eyes of the public ; to guard legislation against the idols of the tribe, of the forum, and of the theatre, — to do all these things, and do them well, would furnish occupation which the purest ambition and highest culture might well crave. And if the press is ever to occupy, in democratic countries, the place which it claims for itself, and which its admirers assign it, this, or something like this, is the work it must do.

How far it falls short of this standard amongst us, everybody knows. Work of this kind can never be done by men who are, as is the case with nearly all our editors of influence and ability, themselves partisans, and who pass their lives in the political arena, rent by all the passions of the hour, and clutching at every prize which party offers to the competition of its followers. There are few newspapers in the United States which aspire to fill any higher position than that of the “organ” of some party, or set, or clique, and hardly an editor who is not bound by his party associations, or obligations, or ambition, to be silent on a thousand subjects on which a true regard for the interest of the public would require him to speak, to pass over hundreds of abuses which it is his duty to expose, to eulogize innumerable persons whom he is bound by every valid consideration “to reprobate and denounce.” And it is but just to the public to say, that it is perfectly well aware of all this. Hence there is every day less and less importance attached to anything the newspapers may say. Even when honest criticism of public men or public measures appears in them, it produces little or no effect, owing to the general want of confidence in the good faith or disinterestedness of the writer. One of the evil results of this state of things is the practical exemption of the administration for the time being from that most useful of all checks, — the vigilance of the opposition. The opposition press in the United States is watchful enough, and fault-finding enough ; but the administration is always able to treat its warnings and remonstrances with indifference, for the simple reason that the public is not disturbed by them.

But these defects are not peculiar to the press of the United

States. They displayed themselves not less glaringly in the French press during the brief period of freedom which it enjoyed under the Orleans dynasty. The newspapers played a great part in the political contests of those days, but it was as combatants. The editors became great political personages, not as commentators or critics, but as party leaders, who enjoyed the privilege of making a short speech to a great many thousand people every morning, and by whom all the prizes of official life were as attainable as by any member of the Chamber. The newspaper was nothing, the editor or contributors were everything. The *National* and the *Presse* were simply sheets on which Carrel or Girardin printed their speeches; and they reflected the fears, hopes, hates, and prejudices of their owners, without an attempt to disguise them. Either of these distinguished men would have repelled the imputation of impartiality or neutrality with scorn or indignation. In fact, it may be said that no such thing as a political press has ever existed in France. What went under that name was a band of political partisans, who wrote their harangues instead of delivering them. The result was, that the public never looked to it for either criticism or advice, and witnessed its overthrow with extraordinary equanimity. If it had expected from it anything like judicial comment on public affairs, it would have been miserably disappointed. What it got was passionate and brilliant invective directed against the government, glowing with party heat, bitter with a bitterness which in our contests is unknown, and finished in every line with that exceeding finish of form which has placed French political writing, in spite of its inaccuracy and vagueness of thought, so far above that of every other country.

The English press, we feel bound to say, has come nearer to the performance of the legitimate functions of a press than that of either France or America; not, in our opinion, through the merit of its conductors, but because they have been forced by circumstances to retain its anonymousness. The preservation of this feature, which many people consider obnoxious, but which we are persuaded is necessary for the proper performance of the duties of the press, has been due mainly to the peculiar social and political organization of the country. The landed aristocracy has for ages been the dominant force, both in

society and government, while the press has been the creation of the middle class, and the liberty of the press one of its hardest-earned victories. If, however, every editor and every writer had been obliged to appear in the lists visor up, to try conclusions with such antagonists as king and church and peers, his social insignificance, in a community in which social position was, and still is, of such vast importance, would of itself have insured his defeat. Masked by the editorial helmet, however, crown, nobility, and legislature have all gone down before his victorious lance; and the result has been the acquisition of a power and influence which, under any other circumstances, would have been impossible, such as has in no other country been witnessed, and which, taken for all in all, has achieved great and lasting triumphs for liberty and humanity.

Now, however, this influence begins to wane. Recent discussions reveal very clearly the fact, that English society begins to get restive under newspaper rule, and to dispute the authority of the tribunal before which it has long bowed submissively. But this is due, in our opinion, mainly to the fact that the press has of late years been rendered careless by its success. It has grown weary of the arm to which it owed its strength, or, in other words, has begun to abandon its anonymity. When the *Times* was at the zenith of its power, Sir Robert Peel wrote to thank the editor for his support, without even knowing his name; to-day the editor is one of the best-known members of London society, and may be seen any evening in the season in the drawing-rooms of cabinet ministers. This may be a personal gain for the editor, but it involves a serious loss for the *Times*. Jupiter Tonans in a dress-coat and white cravat is not such a terrible deity after all.

It may be readily inferred from the foregoing remarks, that we believe the press, in a democratic country, will never stand in its proper relation towards the public, as long as the newspaper is an appendage to the editor and an instrument for pushing his personal fortunes, — as long, in short, as it is not conducted anonymously, or as nearly anonymously as the ordinary conditions of social life will allow. Most of the denunciations which one hears of anonymous writing in periodical publications, on the ground of the facility it affords for slanderous attacks on private character, are hardly worth consider-

ation. In any community in which such attacks are not prevented by the fear of the law and of public reprobation, the ostentatious parade of the editor's name before the world will not prevent them either, as is proved by some notorious examples in this country. And the restraint, if there be any, which is imposed on a writer by the necessity of signing his name, as under the existing law in France, is productive of no gain to the public, of whatever use it may in despotic countries be to the government, which will at all counterbalance the injury done to the press by its forced conversion into a mere expression of individual opinion. For it is very well known that, in the present state of general cultivation, by far the greater portion of the public in every country are unable to separate an opinion from the character or standing of the man who utters it, and to consider it on its own merits. To reveal, therefore, the names of the authors of most of the political articles, either here or in England, would be to deprive them of great part of their weight. To a very large number of persons their own want of familiarity with a writer's name prevents them from attaching any importance to, much less bestowing any consideration upon, anything he says.

If journalism is to play the part in democracy to which it aspires, the journalist must, therefore, seek to withdraw himself as far as possible from the gaze of his readers, — to become, in short, a Voice, and nothing more. And, above all things, he must put the "deluding joys" both of office and of patronage far from him. For we confess we are unable to think of any surer expedient for rendering the press useless and worse than useless, for converting it into a means of debauching public opinion and throwing a mantle over corruption, than the practice, which is becoming more and more general, of rewarding editors for political services with places in the public employ. It ought to be, and we trust one day will become, as discreditable for an editor to accept any such favor from any administration, as for a member of Congress to take a bribe. The honest and conscientious journalist must seek the reward of his labors solely in the extension of his influence, and the nurture and propagation of his ideas; and any political writer to whom this prospect seems cheerless or repulsive, may rest satisfied that he has mistaken his calling.